



News for Immediate Release

February 6, 2003

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**Possible Dramatic Fluctuations in Feather River Flows Anticipated**

OROVILLE - The following warning being issued by the Department of Water Resources concerns anglers and others who may be affected by sudden increases or decreases in Feather River flows downstream of the Thermalito Afterbay Outlet near Oroville. The Department may be required to make relatively sudden, dramatic increases in flow to the Feather River in order to meet salinity standards in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, beginning as early as Monday, February 10, and continuing through mid-March. The anticipated flows could range between 1200 cubic feet per second and 10,000 cubic feet per second corresponding to stage changes of several feet within a 24-hour period. Dramatic increases in flow of this type due to flood control requirements are not abnormal for this time of year. This warning is being issued as a precautionary measure because the reason for the potential increases as described above may not be intuitively obvious to river users, as they may not coincide with any sort of major rain event.

Following is the current schedule for the increases in total flow to the Feather River downstream of the Thermalito Afterbay outlet.

02/11/03 @ 00:01 increase from 1250 cfs to 1700 cfs

02/11/03 @ 02:00 increase from 1700 cfs to 2500 cfs

02/11/03 @ 04:00 increase from 2500 cfs to 3500 cfs

02/11/03 @ 06:00 increase from 3500 cfs to 4500 cfs

02/11/03 @ 08:00 increase from 4500 cfs to 6000 cfs

02/11/03 @ 10:00 increase from 6000 cfs to 7500 cfs

**This schedule is subject to change without notice.**

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- **What is the requirement that is causing the change in reservoir releases?** It is a water quality standard in the western Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The standard, called "X2", is designed to protect resident, as well as, migratory fish.
- **What is "X2"?** It is the distance from the Golden Gate Bridge to the location where salinity in the Delta is 2 parts per thousand. The standard is defined as maintaining the X2 location downstream of specific locations in the western Delta for a predefined number of days. For the month of February, we are required to maintain X2 at or downstream of Port Chicago for about 25 days. To do this, we have to maintain Delta outflow at about 30,000 cubic feet per second.
- **How much water will need to be released?** That depends upon weather conditions over the next few weeks. At this point, we are anticipating only minor assistance from Mother Nature to meet this requirement. If the Sacramento Valley does not experience a significant increase in runoff, 200-thousand-acre feet from Lake Oroville could be released.
- **Why can't the Department call upon other reservoirs?** The Central Valley Project and State Water Project share responsibility for meeting the Delta standards. During very dry periods (such as the summer months) the CVP provides about 75 percent of the water to meet the standards. During wet periods when the reservoirs are gaining storage, the split is 55percent for the CVP and 45 percent for SWP.
- **What about cutting Delta exports?** We may also cut SWP pumping. In fact, another 150-200 TAF of pumping could be lost to meet the standard.
- **What happens if it starts to rain later in the month?** We will assess conditions daily and reduce reservoir releases as quickly as permissible.

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The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

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